

Wisconsin Bald Eagle and Osprey Surveys 2002

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Acknowledgments

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A very special thank you to all the individuals, organizations and schools that adopted eagle nests. These people make possible the conservation of Wisconsin's bald eagle population.

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Bald eagle data from 1973 to 1989 was summarized from the annual bald eagle survey flights of Charles Sindelar. Special thanks go to Dave Evens, Rex Runke, Bruce Bacon, Dale Katsma and Bill Volkert for conducting ground observations.

Summary

DNR Wildlife Management staff conducted breeding survey flights using DNR pilots and aircraft. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service pilots surveyed certain nests along the Upper Mississippi Fish & Wildlife Refuge. The first eagle flight was flown in early April to locate active nests and the second eagle flight was flown in June to count young. The first osprey flight was flown in mid May to locate active nests and the second osprey flight was flown in mid July to count young. Ground observations by volunteers and banders supplemented the aerial checks. Regional reports that detailed all eagle and osprey nest locations and summarized eagle and osprey productivity by county were developed. These reports are on file at the Bureau of Endangered Resources' Natural Heritage Inventory in Madison.

Aerial surveys were conducted along the Mississippi River and the Lower Wisconsin River by DNR staff to locate wintering eagles.

DNR staff and volunteer rehabilitators collected dead and injured eagles. Dead birds were necropsied by DNR Wildlife Management Staff Veterinarians in Madison. Local licensed rehabilitators treated injured birds. Severely injured birds were shipped to The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota at St. Paul. Eagle carcasses were sent to the National Eagle Repository at Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colorado. From this repository feathers were sent on request to Native Americans for religious purposes.

Throughout the state DNR staff contacted private landowners to protect eagle nests from disturbance. On public properties all nests are fully protected from disturbances and habitat is managed to promote large, supercanopy white pines.

Bald Eagles

A total of 831 eagle nest territories were occupied by breeding adults in 2002. This is an increase of 12 pairs from 2001. Occupied means incubation, eggs, young, or a repaired nest was observed. Eagles nested in 56 of the state's 72 counties. At least 728 young were observed in 730 nests in 2002. Early leaf-out and chronic wasting disease workload prevented aerial observations of young in most southwestern Wisconsin nests. The 730 nests with known outcome had an average 1.00 young per occupied territory and 1.50 young per successful territory. Nest success was 66%. Eagle productivity remained somewhat below average in northwestern Wisconsin and dropped well below average in north central Wisconsin. See the attached table for a regional summary of productivity and success.

The inland lakes region of northwest and north central Wisconsin held 70% of the state's breeding population of bald eagles. The number of young produced in 2002 is at the level needed for the statewide eagle population to continue its overall rate of growth and expansion.

Eagle Deaths & Injuries in Wisconsin

DNR staff and volunteers recovered over 100 sick, injured or dead eagles in 2002. The leading cause of death was miscellaneous trauma with vehicle collisions the primary cause. Most vehicle collisions occurred when eagles were scavenging car-killed deer.

Each year for the last four years one or two eagle carcasses were found shot in Jackson County. Their talons and heads removed. DNR Conservation Wardens are investigating these deaths.

Eagle Translocation

Four young eagles were taken from nests in northwestern Wisconsin and transferred to New York City for reintroduction. We wish these country birds well in The Big Apple.

Osprey

In 2002 there were 383 osprey territories located in Wisconsin. This is a decrease of 13 pairs from 2001. These 383 pairs of osprey produced 432 young with 1.13 young per occupied nest, 1.85 young per successful nest, and 61% nest success.

North central Wisconsin osprey productivity was 0.98 young per occupied territory, which is well below other regions of Wisconsin. North central Wisconsin has a very large population of breeding bald eagles.

The statewide 10-year average osprey population size recorded in our surveys was 389 pairs (ranging from 364 to 407 pairs). The osprey population is reproducing at levels that should show a slow growth in the statewide population. However, the statewide population has not expanded since 1993.

The osprey remains listed as a Wisconsin State Threatened Species. Their overall population is less than half that of the statewide eagle population. Ospreys nested in 44 of the state's 72 counties.

Osprey Platforms

Wildlife biologists have been putting out osprey nest platforms since 1972. Osprey readily nest on these platforms and the platforms provide a secure nest site. Today over half of the breeding population of osprey nest on platforms. Funds for platform work ran out in 1993. Since then local clubs and the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation have put up additional platforms on power lines and to secure nests. In 2002 there were 10 platforms erected throughout Wisconsin by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, Consolidated Water Power Company, DNR, and various conservation groups.

Osprey Translocation

Wisconsin entered the seventh year of the osprey translocation project. Eight osprey chicks were taken from nests in northwest Wisconsin and sent to hack sites in Iowa with a goal of expanding the range of the Midwest osprey population. The birds were taken from nests with multiple young and one young was always left in the nest.

Seven additional osprey chicks were removed from nests in northwestern Wisconsin and hacked from platforms at Big Muskego Lake in Waukesha County in an attempt to broaden the range of osprey in Wisconsin.

Natural Heritage Inventory

The detailed locations of over 1,000 known eagle nests and over 400 known osprey nests are on file with Wisconsin's Natural heritage Inventory (NHI) in the Bureau of Endangered Resources. The NHI is the repository for all information on Wisconsin's threatened and endangered species. It also tracks rare species and species of special concern. The NHI is used to screen all land use activities that require a state or federal permit and is the primary mechanism used to protect eagles and osprey nests.

Table 1. *Summary of the 2002 Bald Eagle Survey in Wisconsin.*

Locality in Wisconsin	Occupied Territories	Successful Territories	Total Young	Young Per Occupied	Young Per Successful	Percent Nest Success
Northwest	303	211	305	1	1.45	70
North Central	292	177	252	0.86	1.42	61
Northeast	80	54	100	1.25	1.85	67
Central	28	21	34	1.21	1.62	75
Southwest	101					
South Central	27*	21	37	1.37	1.76	78
Total	831					
Total with Known Outcome	730	484	728	1	1.5	66

*Includes 2 pairs from Dodge County.

Table 2. *Summary of the 2002 Osprey Survey in Wisconsin.*

Locality in Wisconsin	Occupied Territories	Successful Territories	Total Young	Young Per Occupied	Young Per Successful	Percent Nest Success
Northwest	114	71	133	1.17	1.87	62
North Central	154	82	152	0.98	1.85	53
Northeast	62	43	79	1.27	1.84	69
Central	36	22	44	1.22	2	61
Southwest	16	15	23	1.44	1.53	94
South Central	1	1	1	1	1	100
Total	383	234	432	1.13	1.85	61

Eagle Territories
2002
Total = 831

The map displays the following counts for each Wisconsin county (from north to south, west to east):

- Ashland: 12
- Bayfield: 19
- Burnett: 42
- Douglas: 26
- Iron: 25
- Lincoln: 27
- Marathon: 12
- Menominee: 15
- Oneida: 106
- Ontonagon: 25
- Pierce: 9
- Portage: 5
- Shawano: 12
- St. Croix: 6
- Trempealeau: 4
- Waushara: 3
- Winnebago: 2
- Adams: 3
- Columbia: 3
- Dodge: 2
- Grant: 6
- Iowa: 4
- Lafayette: 1
- Jefferson: 2
- Marquette: 1
- Marion: 8
- Monroe: 2
- Outagamie: 2
- Rock: 1
- Sawyer: 55
- Sheldon: 4
- St. Louis: 26
- Taylor: 8
- Waupaca: 2
- Washington: 2
- Winchester: 4
- Yoshino: 3
- Barren: 18
- Chippewa: 5
- Crawford: 7
- Forest: 121
- Fond du Lac: 2
- Green Lake: 2
- Kenosha: 1
- Madison: 1
- Manitowish: 3
- Marquette: 21
- Menominee: 15
- Monroe: 2
- Outagamie: 2
- Portage: 5
- Shawano: 12
- St. Croix: 6
- Trempealeau: 4
- Waushara: 3
- Winnebago: 2
- Adams: 3
- Columbia: 3
- Dodge: 2
- Grant: 6
- Iowa: 4
- Lafayette: 1
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- Marquette: 1
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- Monroe: 2
- Outagamie: 2
- Rock: 1
- Sawyer: 55
- Sheldon: 4
- St. Louis: 26
- Taylor: 8
- Waupaca: 2
- Washington: 2
- Winchester: 4
- Yoshino: 3

85

Active Osprey Territories 2002 Total = 383

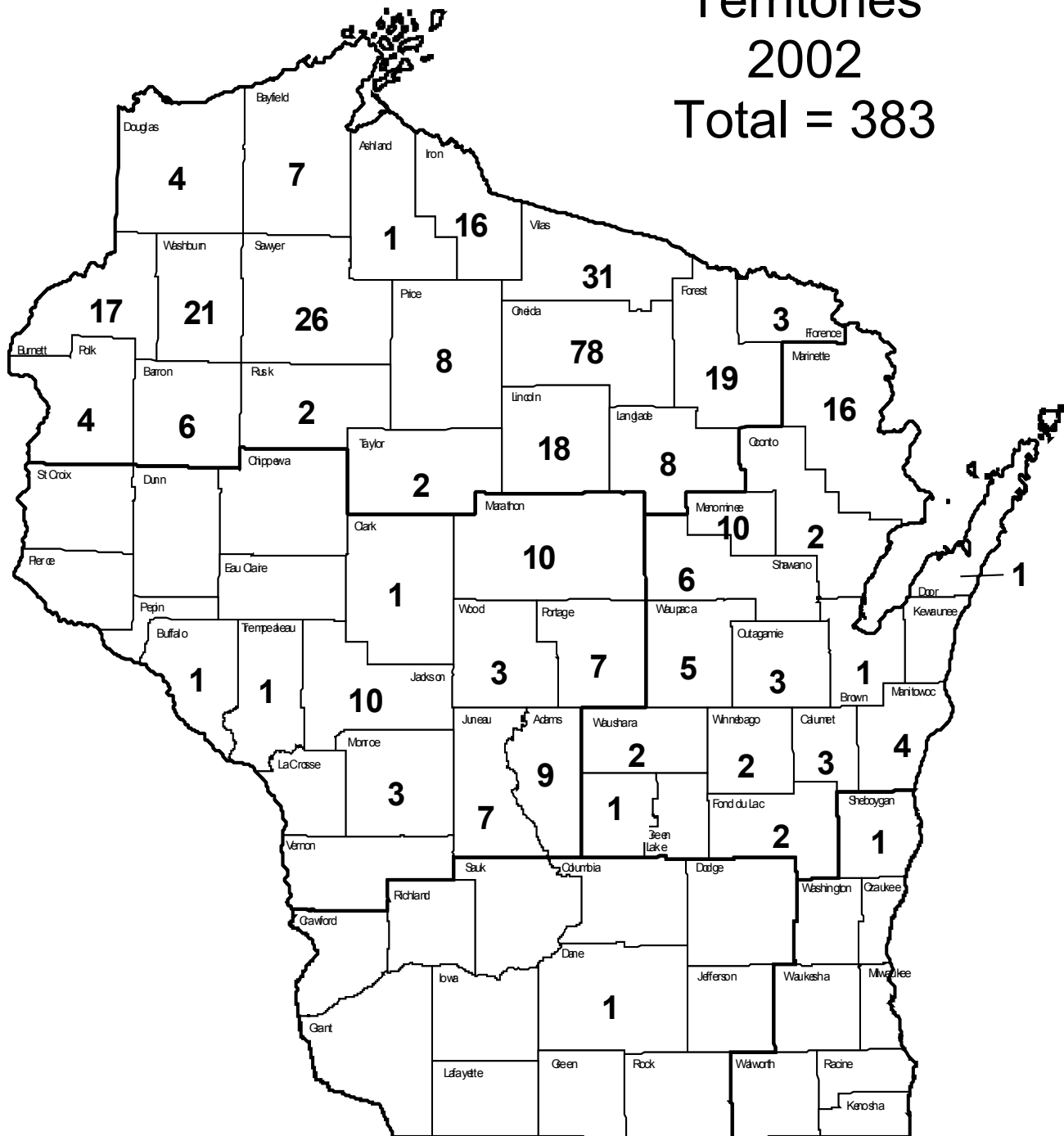


Figure 2. Active osprey territories are those territories where the observer recorded at least one of the following: at least one adult at a repaired nest, an incubating adult, eggs or young in the nest.

WISCONSIN OSPREY NEST SURVEY, 1973 - 2002

Active Territories

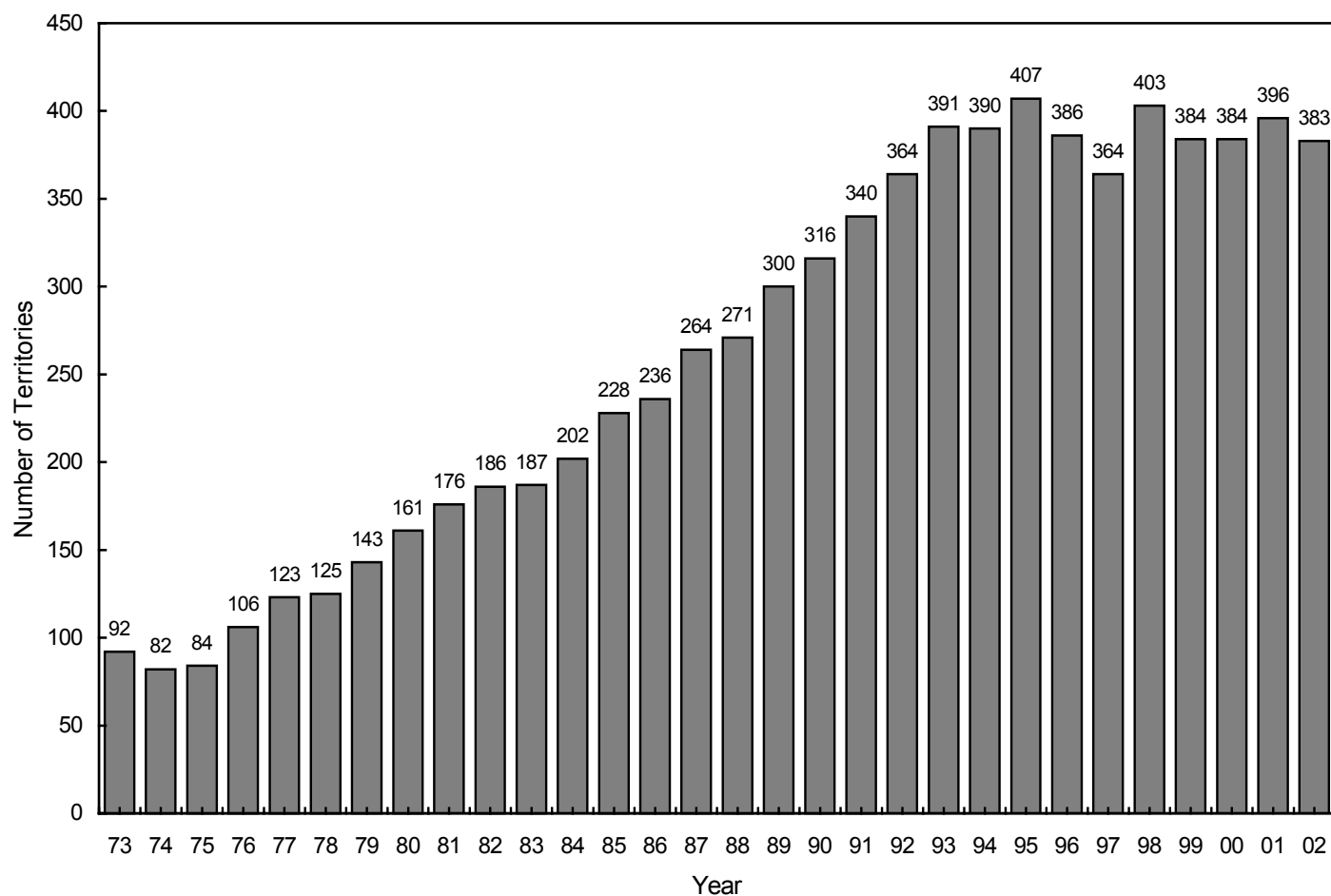


Figure 3. *Number of active osprey territories 1973-2002.*